Macbeth – William Shakespeare.

The characters in this part of the play are:

Macbeth, a soldier in the Scottish army.

Lady Macbeth, Macbeth's wife.

Banquo, a soldier and a friend of Macbeth.

King Duncan, the king of Scotland.

Macduff, a friend of King Duncan.



Background to the story.

The story starts at the end of a battle between Norway and Scotland. Macbeth kills the Norwegian general and defeats his army. Duncan, the King of Scotland, wants to thank Macbeth. On their way to see the king, Macbeth and his friend Banquo meet three witches.

Suddenly they saw the three witches in front of them.

'Who are you? What are you doing?' asked Banquo.

They didn't speak to him, but they looked at Macbeth.

'Macbeth!' cried the witches.

'What?! How do you know my name?' he asked.

They spoke again, all at the same time: 'Macbeth, the soldier! Macbeth, the general! Macbeth, the king!'

'General? King? What are these women talking about?' Macbeth asked Banquo. 'I'm a soldier - nothing more!'

'Who are you?' asked Macbeth. 'Tell us more!'

But suddenly the witches weren't there! Macbeth and Banquo looked here and there, but they could see nobody.

At Macbeths home, his wife, Lady Macbeth, waited, day after day. But one day a letter arrived. It was a long letter from her husband.

> After the battle, Banquo and I met three women. They were witches, and they can see into the future! 'You're going to be a general,' they told me - and they were right! Next, they said: 'Macbeth, you're going to be king! 'I can't stop thinking about it!

Lady Macbeth was excited. Her husband ... King of Scotland! 'I want to be Queen of Scotland,' she thought. 'The witches are right. My husband is going to be king. Nothing can stop us!' She began reading again:

> King Duncan is coming to stay with us soon! His son Malcolm is coming too, and Banquo, and Macduff. We must be ready...

Lady Macbeth cried excitedly. 'King Duncan! In our house? Good! He's king now, but things are going to change. Scotland is going to have a new king!'

When Macbeth came home, his wife began to talk about their future. 'We're going to be rich and happy,' she said, 'when you are king.'

But Macbeth wasn't happy. 'What are you talking about?' he cried. 'How can I be king? Scotland has a king!'

'Listen. You're a soldier, and you often kill men in battles,' said his wife. 'King Duncan is coming here tonight.'

'What are you saying?' asked Macbeth. 'You must be brave2. Remember the witches: you are going to be king. Duncan must die here in our house.
What's the matter? Are you afraid?'



ACTIVITIES

1. Check the meaning of these words. Write their meanings:

battle	future
husband	kill
king	queen
wife	

2. Read the Background to the story on the first page. What do you think the play is about? Read and listen to the extract and check your answers.

3. Read the extract again. Are the sentences true or false? Correct the false sentences.

1 The witches know who Macbeth is.

2 The witches' first prediction about Macbeth isn't correct.

3 Lady Macbeth doesn't believe the predictions.

4 King Duncan is going to visit Macbeth's house.

5 Macbeth is happy when his wife says he will be king.

6 Lady Macbeth wants her husband to kill King Duncan.

4. Answer these questions:

1. Why is Lady Macbeth excited about the predictions?

2 What are Macbeth and Lady Macbeth like?

3 What is their relationship like?

4 What do you think happens next?

5 Read what happens next.

That night Macbeth kills King Duncan. The next morning, the king's friend, Macduff, finds him dead in his room. Macbeth says it was the servants. King Duncan's son, Malcolm, leaves Scotland because he is afraid, so Macbeth is made king. However, he isn't happy. He is sure that Banquo suspects that he murdered the king. He orders his men to kill Banquo and his son, Fleance. The men kill Banquo, but Fleance runs away. Macbeth is worried about Macduff as well and goes to see the witches again.

6. Listen to what happens when Macbeth visits the witches. Put the events (A-F) in the correct order (1-6).

A Macbeth sees a baby over the pot.

B The witches tell Macbeth not to speak.

C Macbeth decides to kill Macduff.

D Macbeth thinks he's safe from danger

E Macbeth sees a soldier's head above the witches' pot.

F The soldier's head says Macduff is dangerous

7. Think and answer the questions.

1 What do you think happens in the end?

a Macbeth kills all his enemies and is king for a long time.

b Macbeth and Macduff fight, and Macduff kills Macbeth.

2 What do you think the message of the play is?

3 Why do you think the witches' predictions came true?

Writing

Find out about another Shakespeare play and write a short summary.

Write 100-150 words. Include this information:

- ✓ **title and kind of play.**
- ✓ **who the main characters are.**
- ✓ **what happens and how it ends**